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# HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Insurance for a 'Light' Christmas"-information from the Rural Electrification Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture

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When Christmas tree lights fail...it may be a matter of little consequence. Perhaps you just need a few new bulbs. But occasionally the trouble may be more serious. Then--with the tree all trimmed--you may have to choose between removing the "dead" string of lights for quick repair...or getting along without the lights altogether.

Of course you don't want anything like that to happen at your house this Christmas. And it needn't. To help prevent it...the Department of Agriculture suggests that you inspect each set of lights before they go on the Christmas tree. Do this especially if your Christmas tree lights are veterans of one, two or three seasons.

To begin with...go over each cord carefully for worn places in the insulation. Where the fabric covering is worn through...a strip of friction tape wrapped around the worn place is sufficient. If the inside insulation is worn, you'll have to do a little more. Trim off the rough edges of the old insulation...then start just above the break and wrap spirally...overlapping each turn about a quarter of an inch. See that all the damaged area is covered. If two wires side by side are both worn...wrap each one separately...one at a time.

When you've finished...and find that your cord is serviceable...check the part of the cord which connects to the two-prong plug. Often cords become worn where they enter the plug. To remedy this...remove the wires from the plug...wrap them separately with tape...and reconnect. If the plug is damaged...put a new one on in its place.

Finally...connect up each set of lights...one set at a time...to an electric outlet to see whether they are now in good working order. If they don't light up, look for a loose or burned-out bulb. Most sets of Christmas tree lights are connected in such a way that every bulb has to work before any of them will light.

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If the lights still fail to go on after the bulbs are all screwed firmly into their sockets, try replacing each bulb in turn with a new one...one which you know is good. Leave the cord connected--so the lights will go on as soon as you have replaced the burned out bulb. Be sure to throw away the burned-out bulb immediately. That way it won't get mixed up with your supply of new ones.

Of course, you'll want to keep plenty of these extra bulbs on hand for replacements...several different colors and as many different sizes as your lighting equipment requires... Otherwise...after a thorough inspection...and after you've made repairs where necessary...your light sets should be ready for an entirely safe and trouble-free Christmas.

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